

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) A tilt adjusting type steering apparatus for a vehicle, comprising:
 - a front column member fixed to a ~~ear~~ vehicle body;
 - a rear column member tiltably connected ~~in a swayable manner~~ to said front column member;
 - a fixed gear ~~formed~~ provided on one of said front column member and said rear column member;
 - a movable gear ~~formed~~ provided on the other of said front column member and said rear column member;
 - a gear pressing lever swayed to effect fastening of said rear column member at a tilt adjusted position by making said movable gear mesh with said fixed gear or to effect releasing of said rear column member from the tilt ~~adjusting~~ adjusted position by ~~disengaging said two gears from each other~~ disengagement of said movable gear and said fixed gear from each other; and
 - an operator lever for interlocking with and swaying said gear pressing lever while being swayed by an

operation of an operator,

wherein a center of swaying movement of said gear pressing lever and a center of swaying movement of said operator lever are different from each other,

said operator lever having a portion which presses a portion of said gear pressing lever and shifts relative to said portion of said gear pressing lever during an operation of said operation lever.

2. (Currently Amended) A tilt adjusting type steering apparatus for a vehicle according to claim 1, wherein a handle portion, for the operator, of said operator lever is disposed ~~below~~ under said rear column member.

3. (Withdrawn, Currently Amended) A tilt adjusting type steering apparatus for a vehicle according to claim 1, wherein ~~a buffer member is interposed between slide-abutting surfaces, abutting on and sliding on each other,~~ said portions of said gear pressing lever and of said operator lever.

4. (Currently Amended) A tilt adjusting type steering apparatus for a vehicle according to claim 1, wherein ~~the~~ a handle portion of said operator lever is disposed farther away from the center of the sway of said operator lever than ~~the slide abutting surfaces~~ said portion of said operator lever which presses said portion of said gear pressing lever.

5. (Withdrawn, Currently Amended) A tilt adjusting type steering apparatus for a vehicle according to claim 3, wherein ~~the~~ a handle portion of said operator lever is disposed farther away from the center of the sway of said operator lever than ~~the slide abutting surfaces~~ said portion of said operator lever which presses said portion of said gear pressing lever.

6. (Previously Presented) A tilt adjusting type steering apparatus for a vehicle according to claim 1, wherein said operator lever is molded of a non-ferrous metal or a synthetic resin.

7. (Withdrawn) A tilt adjusting type steering apparatus for a vehicle according to claim 3, wherein said operator lever is molded of a non-ferrous metal or a

synthetic resin.

8. (Previously Presented) A tilt adjusting type steering apparatus for a vehicle according to claim 4, wherein said operator lever is molded of a non-ferrous metal or a synthetic resin.

9. (Currently Amended) A tilt adjusting type steering apparatus for a vehicle according to claim 1, wherein a proximal ~~side-end~~ portion of said gear pressing lever is supported in a swayable manner on a lower side of said rear column member,

a proximal ~~side-end~~ portion of said operator lever is supported in ~~the~~ a swayable manner on a lateral side surface of said rear column member, a middle portion thereof ~~abuts on~~ is abutted with said gear pressing lever directly or through a buffer member interposed therebetween, and a ~~front side~~ distal end portion thereof is bent as a handle portion and ~~thereafter extended up to a lower part of~~ toward an area under said rear column member, and

said operator lever, when swayed in back-and-forth directions of the vehicle, interlocks with and sways said gear pressing lever in the back-and-forth directions of

the vehicle.

10. (Withdrawn, Currently Amended) A tilt adjusting type steering apparatus for a vehicle according to claim 3, wherein a proximal ~~side~~-end portion of said gear pressing lever is supported in a swayable manner on a lower side of said rear column member,

a proximal ~~side~~-end portion of said operator lever is supported in ~~the~~ a swayable manner on a lateral side surface of said rear column member, a middle portion thereof ~~abuts on~~ is abutted with said gear pressing lever through said buffer member, and a ~~front side~~ distal end portion thereof is bent as a handle portion and ~~thereafter extended up to~~ under a lower part of said rear column member, and

said operator lever, when swayed in back-and-forth directions of the vehicle, interlocks with and sways said gear pressing lever in the back-and-forth directions of the vehicle.

11. (Currently Amended) A tilt adjusting type steering apparatus for a vehicle according to claim 4, wherein a proximal ~~side~~-end portion of said gear pressing lever is supported in a swayable manner on a lower side

of said rear column member,

a proximal side end portion of said operator lever is supported in ~~the~~ a swayable manner on a lateral side ~~surface~~ of said rear column member, a middle portion thereof ~~abuts on~~ is abutted with said gear pressing lever directly or through a buffer member interposed therebetween, and a ~~front side~~ distal end portion thereof is bent as a handle portion and ~~thereafter~~ extended up to toward an area under a lower part of said rear column member, and

said operator lever, when swayed in back-and-forth directions of the vehicle, interlocks with and sways said gear pressing lever in the back-and-forth directions of the vehicle.

12. (Withdrawn, Currently Amended) A tilt adjusting type steering apparatus for a vehicle according to claim 5, wherein a proximal ~~side~~ end portion of said gear pressing lever is supported in a swayable manner on a lower side of said rear column member,

a proximal ~~side~~ end portion of said operator lever is supported in ~~the~~ a swayable manner on a lateral side ~~surface~~ of said rear column member, a middle portion thereof ~~abuts on~~ is abutted with said gear pressing lever

through said buffer member, and a ~~front side~~ distal end portion thereof is bent as a handle portion and ~~thereafter extended up to~~ toward an area under a lower part of said rear column member, and

said operator lever, when swayed in back-and-forth directions of the vehicle, interlocks with and sways said gear pressing lever in the back-and-forth directions of the vehicle.

13. (Currently Amended) A tilt adjusting type steering apparatus for a vehicle according to claim 1, further comprising a biasing means for device elastically biasing at least one of said gear pressing lever and said operator lever ~~in such directions as to get close to each~~ toward the other.

14. (Withdrawn, Currently Amended) A tilt adjusting type steering apparatus for a vehicle according to claim 3, further comprising a biasing means for device elastically biasing at least one of said gear pressing lever and said operator lever ~~in such directions as to get close to each~~ toward the other.

15. (Currently Amended) A tilt adjusting type steering apparatus for a vehicle according to claim 4, further comprising a biasing means for device elastically biasing at least one of said gear pressing lever and said operator lever ~~in such directions as to get close to each~~ toward the other.

16. (Withdrawn, Currently Amended) A tilt adjusting type steering apparatus for a vehicle according to claim 5, further comprising a biasing means for device elastically biasing at least one of said gear pressing lever and said operator lever ~~in such directions as to get close to each~~ toward the other.

17. (Currently Amended) A tilt adjusting type steering apparatus for a vehicle according to claim 6, further comprising a biasing means for device elastically biasing at least one of said gear pressing lever and said operator lever ~~in such directions as to get close to each~~ toward the other.

18. (Withdrawn, Currently Amended) A tilt adjusting type steering apparatus for a vehicle according to claim 7, further comprising a biasing means for device

elastically biasing at least one of said gear pressing lever and said operator lever ~~in such directions as to get close to each~~ toward the other.

19. (Currently Amended) A tilt adjusting type steering apparatus for a vehicle according to claim 8, further comprising a biasing means for device elastically biasing at least one of said gear pressing lever and said operator lever ~~in such directions as to get close to each~~ toward the other.

20. (Currently Amended) A tilt adjusting type steering apparatus for a vehicle according to claim 9, further comprising a biasing means for device elastically biasing at least one of said gear pressing lever and said operator lever ~~in such directions as to get close to each~~ toward the other.

21. (Withdrawn, Currently Amended) A tilt adjusting type steering apparatus for a vehicle according to claim 10, further comprising a biasing means for device elastically biasing at least one of said gear pressing lever and said operator lever ~~in such directions as to get close to each~~ toward the other.

22. (Currently Amended) A tilt adjusting type steering apparatus for a vehicle according to claim 11, further comprising a biasing means for device elastically biasing at least one of said gear pressing lever and said operator lever ~~in such directions as to get close to each~~ toward the other.

23. (New) A tilt adjusting type steering apparatus for a vehicle according to claim 2, wherein said operator lever is molded of a non-ferrous metal or a synthetic resin.

24. (New) A tilt adjusting type steering apparatus for a vehicle according to claim 9, wherein said operator lever is molded of a non-ferrous metal or a synthetic resin.

25. (New) A tilt adjusting type steering apparatus for a vehicle according to claim 2, further comprising a biasing device elastically biasing at least one of said gear pressing lever and said operator lever toward the other.

26. (New) A tilt adjusting type steering apparatus for a vehicle according to claim 1, wherein said portion of said gear pressing lever and said portion of said operator lever are abutted with each other directly or through a buffer member interposed therebetween.

27. (New) A tilt adjusting type steering apparatus for a vehicle, comprising:

- a front steering column member;

- a rear steering column member tiltably connected to said front steering column member;

- a fixed gear provided on one of said front steering column member and said rear steering column member;

- a movable gear provided on the other of said front steering column member and said rear steering column member, said movable gear being engageable with said fixed gear to fix a tilt position of said rear steering column member and being disengageable from said fixed gear to release said rear steering column member for tilt adjustment;

- a gear pressing lever which pivots about a first pivot axis to engage and disengage said movable gear and said fixed gear; and

- an operator lever which pivots about a second pivot axis different from said first pivot axis, to pivot said

gear pressing lever for engagement and disengagement of said movable gear and said fixed gear, said operator lever acting on said gear pressing lever through a portion which moves relative to said gear pressing lever during operation of said operator lever.

28. (New) A tilt adjusting type steering apparatus for a vehicle according to claim 27, wherein first pivot axis is transverse to said second pivot axis.

29. (New) A tilt adjusting type steering apparatus for a vehicle according to claim 28, wherein a portion of said operator lever and a portion of said gear pressing lever are abutted with each other directly or through a buffer member interposed therebetween.

30. (New) A tilt adjusting type steering apparatus for a vehicle according to claim 29, further comprising a biasing device which biases at least one of said portions of said operator lever and said gear pressing lever toward the other, so that said operator lever and said gear pressing lever are interlocked during pivotal movement of said operating lever to engage and disengage said fixed gear and said movable gear.

31. (New) A tilt adjusting type steering apparatus for a vehicle according to claim 28, wherein a handle portion, for the operator, of said operator lever is disposed under said rear steering column member.

32. (New) A tilt adjusting type steering apparatus for a vehicle according to claim 28, wherein

said gear pressing lever has a proximal end portion pivotally supported on a lower side of said rear steering column member, and

said operator lever has a proximal end portion pivotally supported on a lateral side of said rear steering column member, a middle portion abutted with a portion of said gear pressing lever directly or through a buffer member interposed therebetween, and a distal end portion bent as a handle portion and extended toward an area under a lower part of said rear steering column member.

33. (New) A tilt adjusting type steering apparatus for a vehicle according to claim 27, wherein a portion of said operator lever and a portion of said gear pressing lever are abutted with each other directly or through a buffer member interposed therebetween.

34. (New) A tilt adjusting type steering apparatus for a vehicle according to claim 33, further comprising a biasing device which biases at least one of said portions of said operator lever and said gear pressing lever toward the other, so that said operator lever and said gear pressing lever are interlocked during pivotal movement of said operating lever to engage and disengage said fixed gear and said movable gear.

35. (New) A tilt adjusting type steering apparatus for a vehicle according to claim 33, wherein a handle portion, for the operator, of said operator lever is disposed under said rear steering column member.

36. (New) A tilt adjusting type steering apparatus for a vehicle, comprising:

- a front steering column member;

- a rear steering column member tiltably connected to said front steering column member;

- a fixed gear provided on one of said front steering column member and said rear steering column member;

- a movable gear provided on the other of said front steering column member and said rear steering column member,

said movable gear being engageable with said fixed gear to fix a tilt position of said rear steering column member and being disengageable from said fixed gear to release said rear steering column member for tilt adjustment;

a gear pressing lever which pivots about a pivot axis disposed in a plane substantially perpendicular to a tilt adjustment axis of said rear steering column member, to engage and disengage said movable gear and said fixed gear; and

an operator lever which is operable by an operator to pivot said gear pressing lever for engagement and disengagement of said movable gear and said fixed gear, said operator lever acting on said gear pressing lever through a portion which moves relative to said gear pressing lever during operation of said operator lever.

37. (New) A tilt adjusting type steering apparatus for a vehicle according to claim 36, wherein a portion of said operator lever and a portion of said gear pressing lever are abutted with each other directly or through a buffer member interposed therebetween.

38. (New) A tilt adjusting type steering apparatus for a vehicle according to claim 37, further comprising a

biasing device which biases at least one of said portions of said operator lever and said gear pressing lever toward the other, so that said operator lever and said gear pressing lever are interlocked during pivotal movement of said operating lever to engage and disengage said fixed gear and said movable gear.

39. (New) A tilt adjusting type steering apparatus for a vehicle according to claim 37, wherein a handle portion, for the operator, of said operator lever is disposed under said rear steering column member.

38. (New) A tilt adjusting type steering apparatus for a vehicle according to claim 37, further comprising a biasing device which biases at least one of said portions of said operator lever and said gear pressing lever toward the other, so that said operator lever and said gear pressing lever are interlocked during pivotal movement of said operating lever to engage and disengage said fixed gear and said movable gear.